

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 056764

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QUOTE

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SUBJECT: REUTERS ITEM ON OPIUM BAN

1. REUTERS MARCH 20 CARRIES FOLLOWING REPORT:

2. QUOTE: WASHINGTON, MARCH 20, REUTER -- THE NEW TURKISH  
GOVERNMENT HAS TOLD THE UNITED STATES IT IS CONSIDERING  
LIFTING A BAN ON OPIUM POPPY CULTIVATION -- RAISING THE  
SPECTRE OF RESURGENT U.S. HEROIN ADDICTION AFTER THREE  
YEARS OF DECLINE.

STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID TODAY THAT TURKEY HAS  
ASSURED THE UNITED STATES THERE WILL BE NO PLANTING OF  
OPIUM POPPIES, THE MAIN SOURCE OF MORPHINE BASE AND ILLICIT  
HEROIN, THIS SPRING, WHICH MEANS THERE WILL BE NO POPPY  
CROP THIS SUMMER.

BUT U.S. OFFICIALS ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC FOR THE FUTURE  
OF THE THREE-YEAR OLD BAN ON POPPY CULTIVATION, WHICH  
TURKEY AGREED TO IN EXCHANGE FOR A U.S. PLEDGE OF  
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PAGE 02 STATE 056764

35 MILLION DOLLARS IN COMPENSATION.

THE BAN HAS BEEN CREDITED WITH SHARPLY REDUCING THE SUPPLY OF MORPHINE BASE TO THE CLANDESTINE HEROIN REFINERIES IN AND AROUND MARSEILLES, FRANCE. THE RESULT

HAS BEEN REDUCED HEROIN ADDICTION -- VIEWED BY MANY AS A MAJOR SOURCE OF CRIME -- IN AMERICAN CITIES OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS.

HEROIN ADDICTS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO TURN TO SYNTHETIC METHADONE AND "BROWN HEROIN" FROM LATIN AMERICA AS A REPLACEMENT. NARCOTICS DEATHS IN NEW YORK CITY, WHERE MOST U.S. ADDICTS LIVE, FELL SUBSTANTIALLY LAST YEAR, WITH METHADONE REPLACING HEROIN AS THE MAIN CAUSE OF DEATH.

BUT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT OF PRIME MINISTER BULENT ECEVIT IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM SMALL FARMERS AND FROM NATIONALISTS TO LIFT THE BAN.

THE PEASANTS, MOST OF WHOM GROW WHEAT AS THEIR MAIN CROP, USED TO GROW OPIUM POPPIES ON SMALL PATCHES OF WASTELAND, SUITABLE ONLY FOR POPPIES OR GARLIC -- AS A CASH CROP TO EKE OUT THEIR INCOMES.

APART FROM THE OPIUM, THE POPPIES PROVIDED OIL FOR COOKING, SEEDS AS A FLAVOURING AND CAKES FOR ANIMAL FODDER. THE POPPY BAN HAS MEANT AN END TO CULTIVATION EVEN FOR THOSE PURPOSES, HOWEVER, AND THE PEASANTS ALSO COMPLAINED THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ADEQUATELY COMPENSATED FOR GIVING UP THEIR TRADITIONAL SOURCE OF INCOME.

TURKISH NATIONALISTS RESENT A FOREIGN POWER INTERFERING IN THEIR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL TRADITIONS.

THE POPPY FLOWER ITSELF IS A NATIONAL SYMBOL AND POPPY CULTIVATION HAD BEEN A WAY OF LIFE FOR 70,000 TO 80,000 FARM FAMILIES, EVEN THOUGH NONE OF THEM DEPENDED UPON IT FOR A LIVING.

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PAGE 03 STATE 056764

U.S. OFFICIALS STRESS THAT, DESPITE SOME PRESS REPORTS FROM TURKEY, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS NOT ALREADY DECIDED TO LIFT THE BAN. IT HAS, HOWEVER, ORDERED THE PLANTING OF SMALL AREAS ON STATE FARMS TO PRESERVE THE POPPY SEED SUPPLY.

LYING IN THE GROUND THROUGH THE WINTER. IN LATE MARCH LYING IN THE GROUND THROUGH THE WINTER. IN LATE MARCH

OR EARLY APRIL, THE PLOTS WERE RESEEDING TO MAKE UP FOR WINTER DAMAGE. THE CROP WAS HARVESTED IN LATE JUNE.

THERE WAS NO PLANTING LAST OCTOBER AND THERE WILL BE NONE THIS SPRING, THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT HAS SAID. THE

ASSURANCES WERE CONVEYED LAST WEEK BY TURKISH AMBASSADOR MELIH ESENBEL TO DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE KENNETH RUSH AND MR. JOSEPH SISCO, UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

HE ALSO ASSURED THE UNITED STATES THAT IF POPPY CULTIVATION IS RESUMED, TURKEY WILL ENFORCE STRICT CONTROLS TO SEE THAT THE CROP IS NOT DIVERTED TO ILLICIT USE. HOWEVER, U.S. OFFICIALS NOTE THAT TURKEY'S RECOGNITION THAT IT WAS UNABLE TO CONTROL THE DESTINATION OF THE CROP WAS THE MAJOR FACTOR IN ITS AGREEMENT TO THE POPPY BAN.

U.S. OFFICIALS ARE NOT THREATENING TURKEY WITH ANY KIND OF RETALIATION SHOULD POPPY CULTIVATION BE RESUMED.

HOWEVER, SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN FROM URBAN AREAS, PARTICULARLY NEW YORK, HAVE WARNED THAT TURKEY RUNS THE RISK OF LOSING U.S. AID IF IT SHOULD REFUSE TO COOPERATE IN THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF NARCOTICS.

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STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS HAVE NOT RAISED THIS THREAT WITH TURKEY, BUT THEY SAY TURKEY IS AWARE THAT IT WOULD ENCOUNTER A NEGATIVE U.S. POLITICAL REACTION SHOULD CULTIVATION BE RESUMED. THE UNITED STATES RECOGNISES THAT THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM ITS FARMERS BUT IT INSISTS THAT THE POPPY BAN HAS BEEN USEFUL

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PAGE 04 STATE 056764

AND NECESSARY IN REDUCING U.S. HEROIN ADDICTION. END  
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